

The difficulty of securing and maintaining a green turf has long been felt as a serious obstacle in the work of beautifying public grounds or domestic surroundings in the Southern States. Under No. 4263 Mr. Fairchild describes what appears to be an admirable substitute for a grass lawn, and one that will endure several years where no grass has been found at all successful.

It will, of course, be readily understood by all who examine these inventories that the values of the various importations are extremely unequal. Some may prove of technical interest merely, while others will have far-reaching commercial importance.

It is not to be expected that all the species or varieties secured by our agricultural explorers will prove to be entirely new to specialists or dealers. Many plants have been imported and tested heretofore without any permanent record as to results. We are intentionally securing small quantities of the seeds of many such species, either to permit tests by some improved methods of culture, or for distribution to parts of the country where experiments have not been made. Furthermore, specialists in various crops often apply for imported seed of well-known plants, in order to ascertain by careful comparative tests the existence of differences in vigor or other qualities, some of which, though inconspicuous, are economically of great importance. It should be remembered, for instance, that many plants cultivated only in an unimproved form in this country have been subjected in Europe to long and careful selection, by which improved strains have been developed.

Some applicants have sent in requests for long lists of seeds. While there is no desire to limit the number which properly equipped experimenters may receive, correspondents are requested to bear in mind that the seeds and plants listed in these inventories are not a part of the Congressional seed distribution. As a rule they are not secured in amounts sufficient for general distribution, the intention being to place them in the hands of the State experiment stations and of private experimenters known to be fully capable of growing them with the best possible results.

It is requested that in all cases our numbers be recorded by the experimenter for use in reporting the results, and also for permanent reference. The report blanks will bear numbers corresponding to those of the inventory, so that the reports will enable us to bring together for later transmission to our correspondents the results secured in all parts of the country.

O. F. COOK,

*Special Agent in Charge of Seed and Plant Introduction.*

WASHINGTON, D. C., *January 30, 1900.*